

# GREEN CART CHRONICLE

Quarterly Update from the City of Newton DPW Environmental Affairs Division

ISSUE 3, WINTER 2017

## WASTE REDUCTION AROUND THE HOLIDAYS

**Did you know that the holiday season is the most wasteful time of the year?** Waste created by the traditions of giving gifts, decorating our homes and entertaining guests leave staggering effects on our trash and recycling program.

During the holiday season, Massachusetts' residents produce about 25% more trash and use 5% more energy compared to any other time of year. This year practice your 3Rs (reduce, reuse, and recycle) and enjoy a waste-free holiday season.

### TIPS

- Remember to unplug holiday lights at night and when away from home
- Use reusable bags for holiday shopping
- Buy products made from recycled materials
- Give gifts that don't require much packaging or wrapping. Think event tickets, gift cards, or gift certificates.
- Choose greeting cards that can be sent electronically over paper cards
- Reduce food waste by cooking only what you and your guests can reasonably eat.

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Yard waste pickup for 2017 has ended as of today. It will start back up April 2, 2018.



### AFTER THE HOLIDAY SEASON

**Save and reuse:** boxes, bags, bows, ribbons, wrapping paper and packaging supplies

**Recycle what you can't reuse:** packing paper and cardboard

**Recycle your Christmas tree:** during the first two weeks of January

# HOLIDAY GIFT WRAP



## ALTERNATIVES TO GIFT WRAP

- Fabric Gift Wrap
- Reusable Gift and Shopping Bags
- Newspaper
- Paper Bags
- Old Maps
- Old calendar pages
- Recycled Paper Gift Wrap
- Children's art
- Reusable jars and tins
- Towels, blankets, or scarves
- Pillow cases
- Baskets

Wrapping paper accounts for a majority of the waste generated around the holidays. Oftentimes, it is only used once before being thrown out. Unfortunately, most traditional wrapping papers is not recyclable.

The materials that go into making some wrapping paper result in it not being accepted for recycling:

- Wrapping paper is often dyed, laminated, and/or contains non-paper
- Some wrapping paper is very thin and contains too few good quality fibers for recycling

Wrapping paper can only be recycled if it passes the scrunch test. Simple paper can be recycled, but foil or glitter decorated paper cannot and needs to go in the trash.

**Divert waste this holiday season by choosing reusable and recyclable alternatives to wrapping paper.**



Gifts can still be festive and fun, even when not wrapped in traditional wrapping paper.

# NEWTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM

Newton's recycling is not as clean as it should be. Plastic bags continue to be the number one problem—both from people bagging their recyclables and thinking that plastic bags are recyclable in their green cart.

To combat the plastic bag contamination issue, the Environmental Affairs Division of Newton DPW is doing a two month focused education campaign starting in late December. The campaign will include newspaper print ads, online news site ads, general web browsing ads, boosted Facebook posts, and a bill insert enclosed with all water bills.

The primary campaign message is that plastic bags do not belong in the green cart. We know that you, our readers, are committed to recycling and are more likely to already know this information. We ask that you help us by sharing the information with your neighbors, friends, and family in Newton. Together, we can get a cleaner recycling stream!



Keep an eye out for the above image in an upcoming edition of the *Newton Tab*.


## PLASTIC BAG RECYCLING

According to the [Boston Globe](#), the average thin film plastic bag is used for just **12 minutes** before it is discarded. 10% of these bags are estimated to be recycled.



Despite Newton having a [bag ban](#) in place, plastic bags come from other areas and find their way into our carts. Problems also occur when people bag their recyclables. As you, our readers, know, recycling should be loose in the green cart.

Though plastic bags are not accepted in the curbside recycling cart, they may be dropped off at participating retail locations for recycling. Find a location [here](#).

 Thank you for recycling in Newton



# MANAGING CHRISTMAS TREES

Each year, the City of Newton provides curbside collection of Christmas trees for 2 weeks in the beginning of January. In 2018, Christmas trees will be collected Tuesday, January 2nd until Friday, January 12th.

Collection occurs on your collection day only. Place your un-decorated Christmas tree out to the curb by 7am on your collection day during this time.

All decorations must be removed and trees cannot be in a bag.

After this time, the City will not collect Christmas trees. Residents will be responsible for disposing of their own trees. They will *not* be accepted as bulk waste.



Remember to follow the [curbside guidelines](#) when setting out your Christmas tree for collection. All objects must be 3 feet from your carts.



## MISSED THE DEADLINE?

If you miss the two week period in which the city collected, you may wait until April and prepare your tree according to the [yard waste guidelines](#).

## ARE REAL OR ARTIFICIAL CHRISTMAS TREES BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?

Real trees collected in Newton are composted after collection. [Recent research](#) indicates that an artificial tree has less environmental impact than a real tree if it used for at least 6 years.



## ACCEPTED OILS

- Canola oil
- Coconut oil
- Corn oil
- Grapeseed oil
- Olive oil
- Palm oil
- Peanut oil
- Soybean oil
- Safflower oil
- Sesame oil
- Sunflower oil
- Vegetable oil

## NO MOTOR OIL

Motor oil is accepted for recycling in a separate container at the Resource Recovery Center.

# VEGETABLE OIL DROP OFF

Vegetable Oil is now accepted at the [Resource Recovery Center](#).

If not disposed of properly, cooking oil can be a hot mess. It can clog drains, which can lead to build up in pipes and local sewage systems.

So what can you do to avoid a plumbing disaster? A simple solution is to save your cooking oil and recycle it locally. While historically it has been viewed as a waste product, used cooking oil has become a valuable commodity over the past decade and the industry is expected to keep growing strongly. It's now become a key ingredient in biofuels and home heating oil.

## WHY RECYCLE VEGETABLE OIL?



A benefit of biofuels derived from recycled cooking oil is that they typically burn clean, have a low carbon content and do not produce carbon monoxide. Recycled vegetable oil has helped many communities and restaurants in the U.S. reduce their carbon footprint.

# CARTS IN THE SNOW

Crews have a tough time reaching trash barrels and recycling carts behind snow banks. Please clear an area at the curb, or put containers next to or in front of snow banks.

Also, think of the plows when placing your carts out. You should place them where the arm of the collection trucks can reach them, but not where they will conflict with snowplow operations.

**Want to stay up to date with weather related collection delays?** Download Recycle Right Newton to set up service alerts! Available for free from the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).



Properly set out your carts to ensure no interruptions in service and make it easier for drivers to have quick and safe collections

## WHAT TO DO



Shovel out a place for your cart or place carts next to snow banks instead of behind them.

## WHAT NOT TO DO



Please don't leave carts buried under snow if you are able to shovel them out. Also, do not place carts on top of snow banks.



## WHAT IS COMPOSTING?

Composting is a natural degradation process. The breakdown of organic matter occurs over time from exposure to oxygen, moisture, and naturally occurring bacteria. The result of the process is a humus material called compost.

## INTERESTED IN COMPOSTING AT HOME?

You don't have to wait for pilot to begin diverting food waste! Compost bins and kitchen scrap buckets are available for purchase at City Hall Customer Service or [online](#). Pick up items at the Newton Resource Recovery Center with proof of payment.

Kitchen Scrap  
Bucket



New Age Composter



Earth Machine



# 2018 ORGANICS COLLECTION PILOT

In March 2018, The City of Newton will launch an organics collection pilot program in an effort to divert food scraps from the waste stream.

During the four month pilot program, organic waste will be collected from 200 households. The location of the pilot is still to be determined; however, it will be limited to a specific geographic area that corresponds with one route on one waste collection day. Once an area is chosen, participant sign-up will be voluntary.

Each participant will receive a 5 gallon bucket that will be picked up and replaced each week. The material collected from each household will be composted, and participants will have the option to receive one 6lb share of screened compost at the end of the pilot.

## HELP US PICK A NEIGHBORHOOD!

Please take our [survey](#). We would love to hear your thoughts on curbside organics collection in Newton. We are also gauging interest to determine the pilot area. If you really want your neighborhood to be selected, tell your neighbors to take our survey!

